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PRINCIPLES AND PROGRAMS OF COMPENSATORY EDUCATION.

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THE CALIFORNIA MCATEER ACT AUTHORIZED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A 2-YEAR PILOT PROJECT AIMED AT UNCOVERING METHODS OF ENCOURAGING CULTURALLY DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN TO REMAIN IN SCHOOL UNTIL GRADUATION. SELECTION OF 16,000 DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS FROM 24 SCHOOL DISTRICTS WAS BASED UPON THE STUDENT'S SOCIOECONOMIC BACKGROUND, HIS ACHIEVEMENT LEVEL, AND THE SCHOOL DISTRICT'S PLANS FOR IMPLEMENTING EXPERIMENTAL COMPENSATORY EDUCATION PROGRAMS. THE SUCCESSFUL COMPENSATORY PROGRAM DEVELOPS THE CULTURALLY AND SOCIOECONOMICALLY HANDICAPPED CHILD BY (1) DEMONSTRATING TO PUPILS A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CLASSROOM AND LIFE, (2) PROVIDING REMEDIAL AND ENRICHMENT EXPERIENCES NECESSARY FOR ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL SUCCESS, AND (3) AROUSING ASPIRATIONS WHICH WILL ENABLE A PUPIL TO ESTABLISH CONSTRUCTIVE AND POSITIVE GOALS. APPROACHES UTILIZED ARE SMALL CLASSES, REMEDIAL INSTRUCTION, CLOSE TEACHER-PARENT COOPERATION, FLEXIBLE CLASS ARRANGEMENTS, STAFF ORIENTATION AND TRAINING, PRESCHOOL AND PARENT EDUCATION, EMPHASIS ON LANGUAGE SKILLS, TUTORIAL INSTRUCTION, AND EXTRA LIBRARY FACILITIES. INTERIM RESULTS OF VARIOUS PROGRAMS ARE DESCRIBED. (PS)

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Strengthening Counseling Services for Disadvantaged Youth

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PRINCIPLES AND PROGRAMS OF COMPENSATORY EDUCATION

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The McAteer Act as amended in 1965 authorized the establishment of a two-year pilot project in compensatory education aimed at uncovering methods of encouraging "culturally disadvantaged children" to remain in school until graduation. "Culturally disadvantaged" pupils are defined in the act as "... those pupils affected by language, cultural, and economic disadvantages who are potentially capable of completing the regular courses of instruction leading to graduation from the public elementary and secondary schools ...." The act established the office of Consultant on Compensatory Education within the Department of Education and provided for the appointment of a consultant on compensatory education to administer the program and to serve as secretary to the Advisory Committee on Compensatory Education, a 17-member body created by the act whose main purpose is to advise the Department of Education and the Board of Education in all matters concerning the education of disadvantaged children.

During the fall of 1963, the advisory committee selected 24 school districts to carry out the experimental program. In making the selections, the committee considered the economically impoverished backgrounds of the students in the district, low pupil achievement levels as measured by standard achievement tests, and the district's plans for implementing experimental compensatory education programs. Under the provisions of the act, the selected districts were entitled to reimbursement by the state on the basis of $24 per pupil if they matched one-third of the total, or $12 per pupil. During the 1963-64 school year, a total of $300,000 was provided, with an additional $346,000 authorized for the 1964-65 school year to provide compensatory education to approximately 16,000 pupils throughout the state.

The Program

Compensatory education is generally defined as an educational program which compensates for gaps in the experience and skills which many disadvantaged children bring to school. It is a positive approach designed to maximize and expand the educational opportunities of these children.

It has been found that the successful compensatory education program attacks the problem of the culturally and socioeconomically handicapped child on three fronts simultaneously:

- It demonstrates to pupils a close relationship between the classroom and life.
- It provides remedial and enrichment experiences necessary for academic and social success.

- It arouses aspirations which enable a pupil to establish constructive and positive goals.

In all 24 pilot projects, attempts were made in various ways to incorporate these three essential elements. In addition, the pilot programs are utilizing several of the following approaches, generally in combination: (1) small classes; (2) remedial instruction; (3) broadening of enriching experiences; (4) the enlistment of parent support and the establishment of a cooperative working relationship; (5) intensified and extended guidance and counseling; (6) development and enlistment of community resources; (7) flexible class or facility arrangements; (8) staff orientation and training; (9) preschool and parent education; (10) emphasis on language skills; (11) tutorial instruction; and (12) extra library facilities.

Interim Results

Findings after less than a year's operation must be considered tentative. Some aspects of the program will not show significant changes when measured for such a short time. All projects were designed as two-year operations, and so their final results have not yet been reported. Nevertheless, some promising and dramatic results have already been reported. Some examples are presented in the following paragraphs.

In the Willowbrook Elementary School District in southern California, 500 fourth and fifth grade children in five elementary schools are attending after-school classes from 3:15 to 4:15 p. m. The program consists of providing additional opportunities for these children to develop increased skills in speaking, listening, writing, and reading under the direction of especially skilled and understanding teachers who are able to give each child more individual attention and to experiment with a variety of new techniques and approaches especially developed to help the child compensate for his poor environmental background. The results? In less than one full school year, many of the project children's language scores, measured by standard achievement tests, have improved as much as two years. Library card usage went up from 107 pupils to 226 pupils out of a total of 250 project children. More than 1,040 library visits were made by these children, and a total of 1,479 books were checked out. This had never happened before in the history of the school district.

In San Francisco approximately 1,500 pupils enrolled in first and seventh grades of selected schools located in low socioeconomic neighborhoods where poor language skills and cultural diversity are prevalent. A cultural enrichment program whose leading feature was the provision of study trips throughout the city and neighboring communities was developed. It is felt that study trips taken for the purpose of enriching and broadening pupil experiences offer unlimited opportunity for the development of language skills in real situations. The results reported thus far are most encouraging. Teachers, parents, and administrators have enthusiastically supported the program. They have reported signs of academic, social, and cultural growth among the project children involved.

The Merced project involves over 200 seventh and eighth grade students who come from Spanish-speaking backgrounds. These children come from an

environment that develops among many of them low educational aspirations, possibly because limited opportunities have been provided and because they do not envision future job opportunities in relation to their success in education. These needs, plus the rejection of the culture of their parents by the dominant society, often result in a high dropout rate during the high school years. The Merced project is an attempt to instill in the students a pride in their cultural heritage and to develop self-esteem and self-confidence by helping them gain proficiency and appreciation for the Spanish language through daily Spanish classes geared to the students' special needs and abilities.

The results are considerable. In many cases drastic improvements have been made in language proficiency in both Spanish and English. (It is well known that one of the best ways to improve one's language skills is by studying a foreign language.) Perhaps of greater importance is the fact that these pupils are not ashamed or apologetic about their cultural background. After all, how many other Americans can speak two languages as well as they can?

Other Results

In Bishop (Inyo County) a preschool project involving 40 four-year-old American Indian children increased the mental age of the project children nearly ten months in a six-month period; this is an increase of 37 percent above normal.

In Los Angeles in an evening counseling program that involved 360 students, 309 students demonstrated a marked improvement in their attitude toward school, with 327 improving their grades.

In the Centinela Valley project (Los Angeles County), the use of high school counselor-teacher teams increased the chances that participating pupils would stay in school from one out of two to two out of three pupils.

Additional encouraging results have been submitted in narrative form by the project directors.

The project pupils have not been the sole beneficiaries of compensatory education. Hundreds of teachers, administrators, and other educational personnel have profited by the year's experience. New and better educational techniques especially geared to the needs of the children have been developed. Even more important, the schools, the parents, and the community have more positive and realistic feelings toward the project children.